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# HON. SAMUEL TYLER.

Born in Henniker, N. H., February 25, 1797.
Died in Portland, Maine, January 17, 1879.

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# A MEMORIAL SERVICE

HELD AT THE

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BROWNFIELD, MAINE,

FEBRUARY 2D, 1879.

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EXERCISES.

Introductory Remarks.....E. B. BEAN.
Prayer.....Rev. C. H. SMITH.
Address.....Rev. E. S. JORDAN.
Resolutions.....S. B. BEAN.

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# ADDRESS.

It is eminently fitting, when a man like Samuel Tyler, whose history and interests for fourscore years were so closely allied with this town, is removed by death, that the citizens should unite in some expression of their sense of his high merit and of their own great loss.

Having met, with this object in view, it seems appropriate to pass in review some of the more prominent events of his life and traits of his character. And we wish to bear in mind what, if he could have foreseen our action, would best have accorded with his wishes in regard to it; and especially should we avoid that grave offense to his well-known feeling, of indulging in indiscriminating praise.

In connection with a service commemorative, in part, of the philanthropic relations of Mr. Tyler to this people, there comes readily to our thought the grateful plea of the Jewish elders in behalf of the Centurion who sent them to beseech Christ for the healing of his servant: "That he was worthy for whom He should do this, for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

Little is known of this Centurion beyond what is here recorded; his love for the people among whom he dwelt, and the proof he gave of his interest in them in building for them a house of worship. He was not a native of Capernaum; neither was he to whom, with slight change, the words of the Jewish elders are applicable by us, a native of this town, though he was brought here so young that he could remember, as he desired to remember, no other early home.

Samuel Tyler was born in Henniker, N. H., but so entirely did he regard himself a son of Brownfield, that some of his near relatives never heard him allude to Henniker as his native place, and had always supposed, till after his decease, that this was the place of his birth, as well as that where he passed his childhood and youth, and some of his maturer years. His parents removed with him to this town the year the nation was in mourning for the death of its first President. He would have been eighty-two years of age had he lived till the twenty-fifth of the present month.

His opportunities to attend school during his childhood were very limited, the nearest school-house being a long distance from his home. But he early learned to conquer difficulties, and he persevered in acquiring the rudiments of such branches of study as were at that time taught in the common schools.

At the age of sixteen, then a tall and enterprising lad, he enlisted as a private soldier in the last war with England. He was detailed as a personal attendant to Capt. Rufus K. Goodenow, also of this town, with whom he served out his time of one year. The temptations incident to army life, boy though he was, he firmly resisted.

In 1824 he married Miss Elizabeth Spring of this town, a lady loved and honored during a long life, and among a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, for the sweetness of her disposition, and the clear good sense, the fidelity and conscientious thoroughness which she brought to the performance of her varied and responsible duties.

This town was their home till 1825, when what seemed a favorable opening, induced Mr. Tyler to remove to Saco. After a short period of indifferent success he decided to go to Portland. Here also his hopes were disappointed. Subsequently he tried, I have heard him say, more than a dozen different enterprises, and abandoned them all, having prosecuted them, in turn, till it became evident to him that they

were unsuited to his tastes or habits. Providence, "whose footsteps are not known," was leading him better than he knew, and suffered all his plans to fail that the wiser divine plan might take their places.

At the age of thirty-two years he came to a decision which manifested at once the breadth and the heroic temper of his mind. It is a trite saying that apparently slight causes often bring about great results. It was the merest trifle that led Mr. Tyler to take the important step of seeking, in South America, a theatre for the exercise of his talents in acquiring a support for his family, and in building up the modest fortune which, we have reason to believe was, at that time, the height of his ambition. That undertaking has been compared, it seems to me not inaptly, to that of the discoverer of North America, who was induced to sail on his first voyage of discovery by circumstances which, to an ordinary mind, would have seemed trivial. He had heard from a relative that a piece of curiously carved wood had been found on the shore, where it had been washed by a westerly gale. An old pilot told him of having once picked up, at sea, a carved paddle, more than a thousand miles west of Portugal. These and other similar facts, together with his geographical knowledge, led him to the conclusion that there must be land to the west, and to the west he sailed.

It was a statement found in an old geography, that the soil of the Argentine Republic was, in general, exceedingly fertile, and that the country abounded in herds and flocks, while the inhabitants were indolent and improvident, that led this pioneer in a great commercial enterprise to believe that a man who was willing to endure hardship and toil, might obtain a competence in that distant land more surely and speedily than in the thronged avenues of business activity in his own. But it was then practically an unknown country, concerning which no one could give him any definite information. He must go, if at all, ill-informed as

he was, committing himself to the guidance of circumstances of the most uncertain character. He resolved to make the venture, sustained in the struggle of severing himself from all he held dear—family, friends, and country—we who knew him can well believe, by the steadfast purpose which marked so conspicuously his whole career, to conquer rebellious fortune by nobly deserving her favor.

When a gentleman of some note as a scholar had been elected to the Presidency of a New England college, and an acquaintance dissuaded him from accepting the position, expressing his apprehension that, constituted as he was, he would not succeed in it, his prompt reply was, "I will succeed." We can, without difficulty, fancy this penniless, solitary stranger, as, fifty years ago for the first time he walked the streets of Buenos Ayres, fortifying his heart in the face of difficulties and discouragements with the stern resolve, "I will succeed."

If the story of what he endured, and what he accomplished, could be faithfully told, it would be but another illustration of the adage that truth is stranger than fiction. On his arrival in that strange city of one hundred thousand inhabitants, he found himself with only half a dollar in money, without a friend or acquaintance, and knowing no word of the language. After some search and delay he fell in with a resident of the city who concluded to give him employment at work performed by peons, the lowest class of laborers, ranking little above slaves. But he was glad to engage in any honest labor that would give him a support. He could not turn back; he must open a way forward. In this employment he continued for a considerable time, having no advantage over his humble fellow-laborers except as his superior intelligence enabled him to substitute for theirs, methods by which he could perform more easily and rapidly the same work.

We have admired his commanding presence, his noble bearing, which would have distinguished him at any

European court. We can picture him to ourselves as he appeared among those ignorant, degraded sons of toil, himself toiling manfully with hand and brain, but with what different thoughts, aspirations, hopes! Born to lead, with a taste that nothing could degrade, he found advantage in circumstances the most unpromising, and gathered tribute of practical wisdom from the dreariest experience. This labor with peons, I have an impression, he made, in the end, an apprenticeship to the business from which, in part, his large fortune was realized.

He remained in the country, on his first visit, between three and four years—long enough to lay the foundation of the very extensive business afterwards carried on by himself and others between Buenos Ayres and the United States. He has been widely known as the pioneer of the South American trade, but few were aware until recently that to him belonged the credit of shipping, nearly half a century ago, the first cargo of wool ever brought from Buenos Ayres to an American port.

This trade, so inaugurated, has been, I need scarcely say, a profitable one to both countries, not to speak of its advantage, as a source of wealth, to Mr. Tyler and to many of his friends and acquaintances. He was engaged in it, going and returning, and transacting his large business, for thirty-three years—a period equal to the life-time of a generation.

Sixteen years ago he went to South America for the last time, having made in all twelve voyages; Mrs. Tyler accompanying him six times, sharing in his inevitable dangers, fatigues, and privations, as she ever did in his varied and abundant charities.

Both these friends, as we have proofs innumerable, continued to cherish, in all their changes and adventures, the warmest interest in their own people. The well-being of the town which was their early home was a matter of constant concern to them. Although no man perceived more

clearly or felt more keenly than Mr. Tyler its faults and deficiencies, yet no one had its reputation and prosperity more at heart. No sooner did he decide to give up his business beyond the equator, than he arranged to carry out what appears to have been a long-entertained purpose of setting on foot some scheme by which the town could be built up and beautified. Nor need I do more than call attention to the improvements he directly or indirectly caused to be made. The village and adjacent neighborhoods will never lose the impress of his taste and bounty.

One is reminded of the effect which Peter Bayne ascribes to the arrival of Howard, the philanthropist, at the little village of Cardington, which, he says, "had been the abode of poverty and wretchedness, but after Howard came to reside in it, year by year the village of Cardington showed a brighter face to the morning sun, year by year you might see new and different cottages spring up, little kitchen gardens behind, little flower gardens before, neat palings fronting the road." "The inhabitants sent their children to school, and Cardington became one of the neatest villages of the kingdom. If you asked one of the villagers to what or whom it owed all this, the answer would have been, John Howard."

If the question were asked of the people of this town, to whom it is most indebted for the improvements made during the past few years, all as one would give the name of your philanthropist, Samuel Tyler.

I have heard him say that it had been his habit from boyhood to select the wisest and best men he knew as models. In his turn he became a worthy model for others. Hard as he worked for his material possessions, he strove even harder for a true manhood. If at any time he had suspected that he was esteemed chiefly on account of his wealth or social position, it would have caused him keen chagrin.

It was much to have in town, so many years, a man conspicuous for honesty and sincerity, whose word was

never doubted, who was superior to deception, whose principles were as fixed as his own mountains. Perhaps one of the strongest motives which persuaded him to go to an unknown land, was that he might be able to meet the demands out-standing against him, and pay, as he did, the first moment his means allowed, principal and interest.

We can well understand what those who knew him in South America assure us of, that his word came to be another name for truth, among the natives, who were accustomed to assert of this or that which they reported to be true, "it is so, for Mr. TYLER says it is so."

His integrity

> "stood the test of fortune,
> Like purest gold, that, tortured in the furnace,
> Comes out more bright, and brings forth all its weight."

One could as easily imagine George Washington taking the place of Benedict Arnold, as SAMUEL TYLER turning traitor to his sense of right.

His fidelity to his convictions appeared in his charities. When Providence crowned his hazardous undertakings with success, he would seem to have regarded himself as elected an almoner of the divine bounty; the property he had been enabled to accumulate, as placed in his hands to be dispensed according to his best judgment. Holding, thus, his wealth in trust, it was a perplexing problem to him, how most judiciously to distribute it; and he surveyed all fields that he might find in what soil the scattered seed should promise the most abundant harvest.

The fountain of benevolence was full, and no lack of appreciation, no ingratitude, could long keep in check its out-flowing tide. Having himself tasted the cup of sorrow, he knew how to sympathize with the afflicted. Having known the burden of poverty, he could be counted among the righteous who "consider the cause of the poor." While he felt all the antagonism of an active, forceful nature, toward thriftlessness and improvidence, he could not forbear relieving the want which was their natural result.

The reverence for law, so apparent in him, developed, no doubt, by years of severe discipline, gave him the appearance, at times, of exaggerating the importance of self-help in comparison with special divine aid. And he might not have prayed, like Elijah on Carmel, that God would, without human means, consume the sacrifice; but he would, like the same prophet, have stretched himself on the little son of the widow, that he might second the divine power in warming the child to life.

He accepted the inspired definition of pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father; but, while it was his honest intention to "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good," mere traditions, precedents, old or new, creeds, ancient or modern, were not, with him, a final authority. He wished to see all who loved mercy, did justly, and walked humbly with God, joining in worship, and uniting, as brethren, in a persevering endeavor to make the world wiser and better.

When he proposed to convey this church, in legal form, to a corporate body, he used this language: "My only desire and intention, in doing this, is, that the house may be occupied, and the privileges which it affords to all be improved. I trust that you, in your wisdom, may manage all matters relating to the house in such a manner that all the people in this vicinity may feel that they have the right and privilege, in common with you, to occupy the house on all proper times and occasions, and that it is, and shall be, free to all who will go there and occupy the same in common with you."

Had he been asked his creed, he might have replied in the language of St. James, "I will show you my faith by my works." In the words of the venerable Whittier, whose life is as benevolent, and whose sympathies are as broad as were his own, he could say,

"O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."

We are aware that we shall violate a rule by which himself was governed, if, while we consider his excellences, we lose sight of what he regarded as his grave faults. He inherited a somewhat excitable temperament, which was the source of more annoyance to himself than to any one else. He was accustomed to compare his physical system to an engine, declaring that it required all his skill and attention as an engineer to control and direct it. It was not singular if, sometimes, on life's tempestuous voyage, the fire kindled, the pressure great, he was driven temporarily from the track marked out for himself; if he was betrayed into some act or expression which he disapproved; but the undue ardor was of short continuance, and then he hastened to make reparation. If his quick feelings were the gales which impelled him from the direction he wished to take, his sensitive conscience was the needle which immediately pointed him back to his course.

But he has gone from us. We shall look in vain for the venerable form whose presence seemed to shed a certain worth and dignity upon the community. He will come to us no more; but he has left a monument to himself.

Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's Church, in London, was buried in a vault under the edifice he had built, and on a black marble slab was the inscription, "If you seek my monument, look around you." So have we only to look around us to see Samuel Tyler's monument. This house is his monument.

Better educational facilities, and numberless improvements among us, are his monument.

In the deeper admiration which he inspired in us for self-reliance, for industry, for enterprise, for integrity, for benevolence—for all manly virtues—is found his monument.

And so will the memory of himself, as he was, be his fittest and most enduring monument.

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# RESOLUTIONS.

*Whereas*, As citizens of the town and vicinity of Brownfield, we have long been familiar with the noble life of the late Hon. SAMUEL TYLER.

*Whereas*, As a community we have been recipients of his numerous and generous public and private benefactions.

*Resolved*, That we wish to express on this occasion our warm appreciation of his many virtues as a man, a townsman, a neighbor, and fellow-citizen.

*Resolved*, That we have known him as a man whom people of all sects, parties, and classes delighted to honor.

*Resolved*, That we shall long hold in affectionate remembrance his life and labors of love.

> "He rests with the immortals, his journey has been long;
> For him no wail of sorrow, but pæan full and strong;
> So well and bravely has he done the work he found to do—
> To justice, freedom, duty, God, and man, forever true."

*Resolved*, That no less do we appreciate, honor, and cherish the memory of her who was his companion in labors of charity, Mrs. Elizabeth S. Tyler, who preceded her honored husband but a few months to her reward.

J. L. FRINK, *Rec. Sec.*

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